



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Community and Economic Development

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

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City's Winter Homeless Shelter Program Begins

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego today began operation of the 2005-2006 Winter Homeless Shelter Program with the opening of two shelter locations which will provide service for single adults and veterans, as well as a system of care for families.

The 2005-2006 Winter Homeless Shelter Program marks the 19th consecutive year the City of San Diego has assisted the homeless during the coldest and wettest winter months. The program provides meals, shelter and social services, including medical and mental health attention, for up to 410 homeless San Diegans daily.

The two shelters are located at different locations, each with its own social service operator. The single adult program provides 200 beds nightly at 1535 Newton Avenue in Downtown's East Village and is operated by the Alpha Project. The Vietnam Veterans of San Diego operate the site located at 2801½ Sports Arena Boulevard in the Midway/Sports Arena area, assisting 150 veterans.

The family program is managed through a City and County collaborative with the San Diego Rescue Mission and the YWCA. As part of the County's existing hotel/motel voucher program, homeless families are provided safety and shelter. Families enter the program at the Rescue Mission's overnight emergency shelter program where the County will assign case managers and make assessments for each family. Qualified families will be placed into hotels or motels funded through the County's voucher program. Families may also be placed in the City's Cortez Hill Family Center as certain benchmarks and criteria are met. The fully case-managed program will result in placement for needy families in appropriate housing which can be extended up to 150 days due to the program's cost-effectiveness. Providing case management from initial contact will result in other successful outcomes including increased stability, income from employment or benefit placement and long-term housing.

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"Assisting our homeless population is especially important in the colder, winter months," said Mayor Jerry Sanders. "The Winter Shelter program demonstrates the City's commitment to providing a safe place to stay for those who need it and access to meaningful programs to help them find stability in their lives."

The City of San Diego, the County's Health and Human Services Agency and a number of other nonprofit agencies provide more than 1,500 hours of supportive services, including medical and mental health care and substance abuse recovery programs at each of the program sites. The \$590,000 budget for the 2005-2006 Winter Homeless Shelter Program is comprised of funding from the City of San Diego, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the San Diego Housing Commission. Additional funding was provided by the San Diego City Council contributions and core program funding.

On Thursday, December 8, 2005, the City will also take part in the inaugural National Project Homeless Connect Day, a one-day event that links homeless participants to various social services and resources. The event, held at the Newton Avenue shelter location, provides the opportunity for volunteers, community leaders, and business organizations to join non-profits, faith-based groups, and social service providers in "connecting" their homeless counterparts to much needed services in a one-stop venue. Project Homeless Connect was founded in October 2004 by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsome and organized by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

To find out how to make contributions or volunteer to help the homeless in San Diego, contact the Community and Economic Development Department at **(619) 236-5990** or visit the City's Web site at **www.sandiego.gov/ced**.

For more information on National Project Homeless Connect Day in the San Diego region, contact Hannah Cohen at (760) 738-6975 or (760) 715-6975.

For more information on winter shelter assistance throughout the San Diego region, call 2-1-1. This County-wide referral service is available 7 days per week, 24 hours a day and all holidays. TTY service is also available to disabled clients.

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With an emphasis on the City's urban core neighborhoods and low and moderate income residents, the City of San Diego's Community and Economic Development Department strives to improve the quality of life and ensure a healthy economy in San Diego through job development, business development, neighborhood revitalization, public improvements, redevelopment, social services, and revenue enhancement.